to cover Washington, simply by inarching dowa the Shenandoah Valley. This famous avenue for the Invasion of the North, as it afterwards became, ran in a northeasterly direction from about the centre of the State until the Potomac was reached at and to the northwestward of Harper's Ferry ; and, throughout all this distance, it was perfectly possible, by guarding the mountain passes oa its easterly side, to prevent interference by any Federal force operating near Washington with the progress of a Confederate army down the Valley. The region was rich and prosperous and possessed good turnpikes. The inhabitants were thorough secessionists. No Federal commander could afford to neglect a Confederate army in the Valley of Virginia, and press on towards llichmon<l, for, if the Confederate general should cross the Potomac arid invade Maryland, the railroads leading to the capital would bo liable to seizure, and the presence of the enemy in the midst of this fertile and important region would inevitably give rise to such apprehension and alarm that the Federal Government would be compelled to recall its army to drive the invaders from the territory of the "North.

But the Shenandoah Valley offered to the Federal** no such facilities for the invasion of Virginia. It is

true that on its westerly side it was flanlced by the Union territory of Kanawha or Went Virginia, and that the passes through the eastern mountains could easily be guarded. But an advance up the Valley was of no practical utility to the Northern invader, except in so far as it wan worth while to occupy a fertile region from which the South could draw supplies of